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ABSTRACT

A review of the age identification literature suggests older identifiers to be chronologically older and to perceive their health and morale less positively. Most studies examining other correlates fail to control for age or health. The correlates of age identification are examined in a group of 200 workers, aged 55 and over, who predominantly perceived their health as positive. Few of the demographic, physical, interpersonal, attitudinal, or work-related variables examined related to age identification. In the area of psychological well-being, older identifiers have higher levels of life satisfaction and self-perceived happiness. An older age identification does reflect self-perceptions of oneself as less active and less potent. However, on the evaluative dimension which is indicative of self-esteem, no relationship is found with age identification. The findings question the widespread assumption that a youthful age identification is an essential requirement of successful aging. (Author)

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THE CORRELATES AND DIMENSIONS OF AGE IDENTIFICATION

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Running Head: Correlates of Age Identification

ABSTRACT

A review of the age identification literature suggests older identifiers to be chronologically older and to perceive their health and morale less positively. Most studies examining other correlates failed to control for age or health. The present study examined the correlates of age identification among a group of 200 workers, aged 55 and over, who predominantly perceived their health as positive. Few of the demographic, physical, interpersonal, attitudinal, or work-related variables examined were found related to age identification. In the area of psychological well-being, older identifiers were found to have higher levels of life satisfaction and self-perceived happiness. An older age identification did reflect self-perceptions of oneself as less active and less potent. However, on the evaluative dimension which is indicative of self-esteem, no relationship was found with age identification. The findings question the widespread assumption that a youthful age identification is an essential requirement of successful aging.

Popular wisdom stresses the importance of "thinking and acting young" for successful adjustment to old age. Gerontologists themselves have also emphasized the maintenance of a youthful age identification for psychological well-being in old age (Kuhlen, 1959). At the same time numerous services and programs have been initiated for older people which require at least tacit acceptance on the part of the recipient or client that he or she is no longer young. This is so even when programs use such euphemisms as senior citizens, older American, golden agers, retired persons, or any of a number of similar labels. The question therefore arises as to whether such inducements to accept one's aging may, in fact, be detrimental.

In order to answer this question it is important to examine the empirical findings on the correlates of age identification. The most consistent finding in this area has been its positive relationship to chronological age (Atchley & George, 1973; Blau, 1956; Bultena & Powers, 1978; Busse, Jeffers, & Obrist, 1970; Cutler, 1974; George, 1975; Guptill, 1969; Linn & Hirsch, 1977; Mutran & Burke, 1976; Phillips, 1957, 1961; Rosow, 1967; Tuckman & Lorge, 1954; Ward, 1977). In one study (George, 1975), this relationship became insignificant after age 70. The few studies in which this relationship was not found had limited age ranges (Kastenbaum & Durkee, 1964; Preston, 1968) or sharply skewed age identification distributions (Zola, 1962). In most instances age identifications demonstrated a consistent youthful bias relative to chronological age. Although chronological age generally had the highest correlations with age identification when compared to other variables, in very few studies did it exceed a magnitude of $\underline{r} = .4$. Consequently, 85% of the variance in age identification is left unexplained by chronological age alone. In only a handful of studies examining other correlates was chronological age controlled.

Where this was done, previously significant relationships often became insignificant (Busse et al., 1970; Ward, 1977).

Despite some studies which found a slightly greater proportion of women assuming younger age identifications (Linn & Hirsch, 1977; Streib & Schneider, 1971; Ward, 1977) no significant sex differences were found in most studies (Bultena & Powers, 1978; Mutran & Burke, 1976; Preston, 1968; Tuckman & Lavell, 1957; Tuckman & Lorge, 1954). No sex difference was found in one study controlling for chronological age (Busse et al., 1970).

Possibly due to the fact that they have more to lose by relinquishing middle-age roles, persons with greater income, more education, and higher social class have often been found to have more youthful age identifications (Bultena & Powers, 1978; Cutler, 1974; Guptill, 1969; Kutner, Fanshel, Togo, & Langner, 1956; Rosow, 1967). Yet, age identification was found unrelated to occupational status (Streib & Schneider, 1971), to SES when controlling for age (Busse et al., 1970; Linn & Hirsch, 1977), and to income when controlling for age and other variables (Mutran & Burke, 1976). Consequently, this area requires further research with more carefully controlled studies.

Blacks were found more likely than Whites to identify as old (Busse et al., 1970; Linn & Hirsch, 1977). This seems due to other than class factors since in the Busse study these differences persisted even when SES and age were controlled. Further research with larger Black samples is warranted before findings based on these two studies can be broadly generalized.

By far, the most frequently examined age identification correlate has been physical health. One of the earliest of these studies (Suchman, Phillips, & Streib, 1958) conceptually distinguished between objective medical ratings which were found unrelated to age identification and subjective self-health

ratings which were inversely related to age identification. These observations and findings tend to be supported by subsequent research. In two other studies (Burgess, 1962; Perlin & Butler, 1963) objective medical evaluations of health were found unrelated to age identification. In only one study using medical evaluations was an inverse relationship found (George, 1975). Age identification was unrelated to the more objective health indicator of subsequent longevity (Patterson, Freeman, & Butler, 1971). Subjective self-health ratings, however, were found inversely related to age identification in every instance (Busse et al., 1970; George, 1975; Guptill, 1969; Kutner et al., 1956; Mutran & Burke, 1976; Suchman et al., 1958). With respect to health assessment based on mobility, chronic health problems, or functional health the results are mixed with a number showing an inverse relationship with age identification (Bultena & Powers, 1978; Linn & Hirsch, 1977; Phillips, 1961; Preston, 1968; Ward, 1977), and others showing no relationship (Busse et al., 1970; Rosow, 1967; Tuckman & Lorge, 1954).

Somewhat similar results were found with respect to psychological well-being. In the two studies making use of psychiatrists' ratings, older identifiers were found to have a stronger reality orientation (Kastenbaum & Durkee, 1964), a lesser likelihood of a psychiatric diagnosis, and were no different with respect to adaptation or morale (Perlin & Butler, 1963). No relationship was found between age identification and psychological disturbance as measured by items M through R on the Cornell Medical Index (Preston, 1968) nor with measures of psychoneurotic symptons such as somatization, anxiety, and depression (Linn & Hirsch, 1977). Yet, with but one exception (Busse et al., 1970), every measure of psychological well-being based on self-ratings of adjustment, optimism, morale, or life satisfaction was found

inversely related to age identification (Guptill, 1969; Hansen & Yoshioka, 1962; Havighurst & Albrecht, 1953; Kastenbaum & Durkee, 1964; Kutner et al., 1956; Linn & Hirsch, 1977; Morrison & Kristjanson, 1958; Mutran & Burke, 1976; Phillips, 1957, 1961; Tuckman & Lavell, 1957). These studies further failed to control for chronological age or other factors. In two studies where this was done an initially inverse relationship between age identification and self-esteem became insignificant (Linn & Hirsch, 1977; Ward, 1977). Linn and Hirsch (1977) did, however, find younger identifiers to have significantly higher perceptions of internal locus of control even when SES and health were controlled.

The role changes of retirement and widowhood have received considerable research attention and yet the results are inconclusive. An old identification was found more frequently among retirees by a number of researchers (Atchley & George, 1973; Blau, 1956, 1973; Busse et al., 1970; Guptill, 1969; Kutner et al., 1956; Mutran & Burke, 1976; Phillips, 1957; Ward, 1977). However Busse et al. (1970) found no such difference after controlling for age. Likewise, Streib and Schneider (1971), in the only longitudinal study addressing this issue, found age identification to have no effect on the subsequent likelihood of retirement nor did retirement affect subsequent age identification for men. Cutler (1974) and Preston (1968) also found no relationship between age identification and retirement. Unemployed older identifiers, however, were found to be less successful in their attempts to obtain further employment (Sheppard & Belitsky, 1966).

With respect to the role loss of widowhood a number of studies found widows to maintain an older age identification than married persons (Blau, 1956; Busse et al., 1970; Guptill, 1969; Phillips, 1957). However, in two

of these studies this relationship disappeared when age was controlled (Blau, 1956; Busse et al., 1970). Mutran and Burke (1976) found no independent contribution of widowhood in a test of their path model. An overall measure of role loss which included retirement and widowhood was found unrelated to age identification (George, 1975).

Overall social involvement (Bell, 1967), organizational membership (Guptill, 1969), and friendship clique membership (Blau, 1956) have generally been found related to maintaining one's former younger age identification although Bultena and Powers (1978) found no relationship between age identification and organizational participation. Individual contacts, on the other hand, such as the number of one's close friends or the frequency of seeing one's closest friend, seem to have no effect on one's age identification (Blau, 1956). The number of old age peers in one's neighborhood (Rosow, 1967) and the general age of one's friendship network (George, 1975) were positively related with one's age identification. A decline in overall activity level was found characteristic of older identifiers (Guptill, 1967; Ward, 1977).

An age identification as old seemed to be accompanied by a greater awareness of one's aging such as perceiving age changes in oneself (Blau, 1956), the belief that others consider one to be old (Blau, 1956, 1973; George, 1975), age related deprivation (Ward, 1977), the belief that one is in worse circumstances than age peers (Bultena & Powers, 1978), and prior age identification (George, 1975; Bultena & Powers, 1978). Phillips (1961), however, found no relationship between age identification and the belief that one is treated differently due to one's age.

Contradictory results were found with respect to the relationship between age identification and attitudes toward aging. Guptill (1969) found

older identifiers to have more positive attitudes toward old people. Busse et al. (1970) found no relationship between age identification with a measure of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of aging. Older identifiers were found by Ward (1977) to maintain more negative attitudes toward older people. However, this became insignificant when age and other variables were controlled for.

In general, the conclusion to be drawn is that age identification is clearly related at the zero-order level to chronological age as well as subjective physical and psychological well-being. It is therefore surprising that so few of the studies reviewed controlled for chronological age and even fewer for self-perceived health. In those instances where this was done few significant correlates of age identification remained. Furthermore, the relationship between age identification and psychological well-being is still left unclear in light of the numerous studies in which life satisfaction was found to be strongly related to self-perceived health (Adams, 1971; Edwards & Klemmack, 1973; Palmore & Luikart, 1972; Spreitzer & Snyder, 1974).

Another unresolved issue is the interpretation of age identification. The statement that one is old may be a factual assessment of one's age relative to the larger population. On the other hand it may reflect an internalization of the cultural stereotype of "old". Recent research suggests that the stereotypes of aging are not all negative (Brubaker & Powers, 1976) and therefore admitting to being old may not necessarily indicate self-derogation. Furthermore, the possibility exists that age identification may be a multidimensional concept. If age identification is defined as a self-perception in terms of age (Guptill, 1969) it follows that there may be as many facets of age identification as there are facets of self-

perception which is generally considered to be multidimensional in nature (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

In light of the above discussion, this study will address the following research questions. First, what are the demographic, physical, psychological, interpersonal, and job-related correlates of age identification among a group of older persons in relatively good physical health? Is the magnitude of these relationships affected when controlling for chronological age? Secondly, what dimensions of self-perception underlie age identification and what is their relative saliency. The specific dimensions studied were the evaluation, potency, and activity (EPA) factors which semantic differential theory and research has consistently demonstrated as the basis of the connotative meaning of almost any concept (Heise, 1970; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957).

Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

Subjects

In December of 1975, the New York City Department for the Aging received a grant under Title X of the Job Opportunities Program of the Public Works and Economic Development Act. As a result, approximately 1400 positions in municipal and voluntary agencies were created for unemployed persons aged 55 or over. Following an announcement in the press, job interviews were held with over 5,000 applicants in the City's five boroughs. Many of the workers were placed as community outreach workers often providing service to other older persons. Other positions included bookkeepers, museum aides, library aides, typists, cooks, and kitchen aides. Over 80% of the positions were only part-time and the median weekly salary was approximately $70.00.

Data for this study were based on interviews with a random sample of 200 workers still employed nine months after the program began. The age distribution of the study sample ranged from 55 to 86 with a median of 65. Whites, males, married persons, and those between ages 55 and 60 were somewhat underrepresented in the sample compared to New York City's total population 55 and over (Table 1). It is possible that these persons are less likely to become unemployed, or if unemployed, are less inclined to accept low-paying part-time jobs. The sample was better educated and had fewer foreign-born persons than the City's 55 and over population. Compared with a group of inner city residents aged 60 or over previously studied by the New York City Department for the Aging (Cantor, 1973; Cantor & Mayer, 1976) the sample of older workers saw themselves as being in much better health. Health status was perceived as good by 75.5% of the workers and as fair by 23.5%. Only two workers felt their health was poor. Among the inner city elderly population only 33.9% rated their health as good while 42.3% and 23.0% rated it as fair and poor respectively.

Insert Table 1 about here

Materials

Data were collected during the course of personal interviews. These were conducted by a group of trained interviewers who assured complete confidentiality to all subjects. They were held in privacy at the workers' place of employment during regular working hours for which they were paid. Among the measures obtained, the following were especially relevant to the present study:

Age identification. Workers were asked to identify themselves as middle-aged, just past middle-age, old, or very old. The numerical values assigned to the responses ranged from one for middle-aged to four for very

Table 1

Characteristics of Title X Workers and
General Population 55+, New York City

	Title X 55+ (N=200)	New York City 55+ 1/
Age		
55 - 59	17.5	25.2
60 - 64	26.0	23.2
65 - 69	29.5	19.3
70+	27.0	32.2
Sex		
Male	37.0	43.0
Female	63.0	57.0
Race		
White	71.0	88.1
Black	23.0	10.7
Other	6.0	1.2
Marital Status		
Married	51.3	57.4
Not Married	48.7	42.6
Nativity		
Native	73.5	62.7
Foreign Born	26.5	37.3
Years of Education		
Less than Eight	9.0	30.2
Eight	16.5	23.0
Less than Twelve	20.0	15.8
Twelve	31.0	19.0
Thirteen +	23.5	11.9

1/Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population

old. This item was previously incorporated into a Guttman scale of withdrawal from the job (Atchley & George, 1973). In that study, persons identifying themselves as old or very old were found at the end of the job withdrawal process.

Age ascription. Each worker's supervisors was also interviewed and asked to describe the employee as middle-aged, just past middle-aged, old, or very old. These adjectives, the reason for their selection, and their numerical values were the same as those of the age identification measure.

Socio-economic status. This variable was determined by the Two Factor Index of Social Position developed by Hollingshead (1957). Education and former occupational level were the two factors which were combined to obtain this measure of SES. Higher scores indicated lower SES levels.

Occupational level. The respondent's major lifetime occupation was categorized according to Duncan's Socio-Economic Status Scale (Reiss, Duncan, Hatt, & North, 1961). These scores reflect the percentile of combined income and education associated with various occupations. Higher scores indicate higher occupational levels.

Length of unemployment. This refers to the number of months the respondent was unemployed prior to being hired under the Title X program.

Health. Both the older workers and their supervisors rated the subjects' health on a seven-point semantic differential scale anchored by the adjectives healthy-unhealthy with higher scores indicating better health. The number of health problems mentioned by the workers as well as the number of sick days in the past year was also obtained.

Psychiatric impairment. This variable was measured with an adapted version of the Twenty-Two Item Screening Score (Langner, 1962). According to

its author it provides "a rough continuum of impairment in life functioning due to very common types of psychiatric symptoms" (p. 269). This measure has been found significantly related to anxiety, depression, and neuroticism (Shader, Ebert, & Harmatz, 1971). Higher scores indicate greater impairment. In the present study this measure resulted in a coefficient alpha of .62.

Life satisfaction. Ten items from the Life Satisfaction Index-A (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961) were selected to measure this concept. Higher scores indicated a higher level of life satisfaction. The coefficient alpha for these items in the present study was .89.

Self-perceived happiness. Workers were asked, "In general, how happy would you say you are?" The four possible responses were very happy, fairly happy, not too happy, or not happy at all. Scores ranged from one to four with higher scores indicative of greater self-perceived happiness.

Attitudes toward aging and self. Subjects were asked to rate the concepts of "old people", "middle aged people", and "myself" on a series of seven point semantic differential scales which were selected to reflect EPA dimensions. Evaluation was measured by the scales of sad-happy, unfriendly-friendly, unpleasant-pleasant, and worthless-valuable. Potency was measured by the scales of weak-strong, insecure-secure, not powerful-powerful, and dependent-independent. Activity was measured by the scales of idle-busy, inactive-active, and slow-fast. The component scales for each EPA dimension were averaged separately for each concept rated. For each concept, an overall rating was also obtained by averaging the separate EPA scores. Coefficient alpha for the resulting twelve measures (3 concepts X 3 dimensions and an overall combined measure) ranged from .58 to .83 and averaged .69. Higher scores indicated the good, potent, and active poles of the EPA dimensions.

Social activity level. Subjects were asked to indicate the degree to which they engaged in nine social leisure activities. These specific items were selected because they were assumed to sample adequately the domain of social leisure activities older persons often engage in. The activities covered included socialization with friends, volunteer work, educational courses, senior centers, clubs, religious services, hobbies, sports, and movies. Item scores ranged from one for a response of "never" to four for a response of "a lot". A total score was obtained by summation of the item responses and the measure had a coefficient alpha of .62.

Job performance. Supervisors were asked to rate their employees on a number of job skills and traits. These items were selected because they were deemed to sample adequately the domain of skills and traits comprising what is generally considered necessary for successful performance in the jobs under consideration. Item analysis resulted in a final measure consisting of 24 items with a coefficient alpha of .91. The total score was obtained by a summation of the individual item scores. Higher scores indicated more positive ratings of job performance. The areas covered included task competency, interpersonal skills, and reliability on the job.

Job satisfaction. Workers were asked to indicate their satisfaction with a number of aspects of their jobs. These included satisfaction with the intrinsic rewards of the work, financial rewards, interpersonal relationships on the job, the adequacy of resources needed to do the job, and the physical comfort of the work environment. Many of the items were previously administered to a national sample as part of The 1972-73 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn & Shepard, 1974). Item analysis resulted in a final measure with a coefficient alpha of .86. The total score was obtained by a

summation of the individual item scores. Higher scores indicated a greater degree of job satisfaction.

Statistical Procedure

The study's first research question called for an examination of the correlates of age identification and to determine the effect of chronological age on these relationships. Zero-order Pearson product moment correlation coefficients and partial correlation coefficients were therefore computed. The study's second research question called for determining the degree to which the three EPA self-perceptions contributed toward age identification. Using multiple regression analysis the three EPA ratings were regressed against age identification. In the absence of a causal or hierarchical model, all three dimensions were entered simultaneously in the regression.

Results

In response to the age identification question 47.5% of the sample identified themselves as middle-aged and another 40.4% said they were just past middle-age. Few saw themselves as being any older. Only 11.6% considered themselves as old and only one-half of one percent, said they were very old.

The correlates of age identification are presented in Table 2. The highest zero-order correlate of age identification was chronological age ($r = .31$, $p < .001$). Few of the other demographic variables were found related with age identification. Although males were somewhat more likely to have older age identifications, this relationship disappeared entirely when chronological age was controlled. Older identifiers were slightly more likely than younger identifiers to have had more education and to have formerly been employed at higher occupational levels.

Table 2

Correlates of Age Identification: Zero-order and Partial Correlations Controlling for Chronological Age

Variables	r with Age Identification	Partial r Controlling for Age
Demographic		
Age	.31***	---
Race (1 = Non White, 2 = White)	- .02	- .04
Sex (1 = Female, 2 = Male)	.16**	.09
Marital Status (1 = Unmarried, 2 = Married)	.02	.04
Socio-economic Level	.07	.10
Education	.06	.13*
Income	.01	.03
Occupational Level	.15*	.15*
Physical		
Worker's Health, Self-rating	.09	.09
Worker's Health, Supervisors' Ratings	- .16*	- .15*
Number of Health Problems	- .05	- .02
Number of Sick Days	.11	.14*
Psychological		
Psychiatric Impairment	- .09	- .09
Life Satisfaction	.24***	.22***
Self-perceived Happiness	.22***	.19**
Overall Rating of Self	- .18**	- .17**
Interpersonal		
Social Activity Level	- .10	- .11
Supervisor's Overall Rating of Employee	- .03	- .03
Age Ascribed by Supervisor	.14*	- .00
Workers' Attitude to Age Groups		
Overall Rating of Middle-aged	.08	.11
Overall Rating of Old People	- .01	- .01
Work		
Job Satisfaction	.11	.08
Job Performance	- .06	- .04
Length of Unemployment	.18**	.14*

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

No relationship was found between self-perceptions of health measured by the seven-point SD scale and age identification. Older identifiers were, however, more likely to report more sick days during the past year and to receive poorer health ratings from their supervisors. As was the case with the demographic variables, the partial correlations did not exceed .15. Age identification was found to be unrelated with attitudes toward middle-aged people or old people. Of the interpersonal variables examined only the age category ascribed by the supervisors was initially related with age identification. However this latter relationship disappeared entirely when chronological age was controlled for. Of the work variables, neither job performance nor job satisfaction was related to age identification. Older identifiers had, however, experienced a longer period of unemployment prior to their job placement. This latter relationship still held when chronological age was partialled.

It was in the area of psychological well-being that the most consistent relationships with standard age identification were found. Although no relationship was found between age identification and psychiatric impairment, older identifiers exhibited greater life satisfaction $\underline{r} = .24$, $\underline{p} < .001$ and self-perceived happiness $\underline{r} = .22$, $\underline{p} < .001$. The magnitude and significance of these relationships changed little when controlling for age. Despite the greater satisfaction and happiness reported by older identifiers, these persons at the same time had lower overall semantic differential ratings of themselves than did younger identifiers $\underline{r} = -.17$, $\underline{p} < .01$.

It will be recalled that the overall self-ratings was the average of the three EPA ratings. The degree to which these EPA ratings contributed to age identification was assessed by simultaneously regressing them against age

age identification. The results are presented in Table 3. At the zero-order level age identification was inversely related with self-ratings on activity ($r = -.23$, $p < .001$) and potency ($r = -.14$, $p < .05$), and was unrelated to the evaluation ratings. When entered into the regression the activity dimension was the only independent variable whose beta achieved statistical significance.

Table 3

Multiple Regression of Workers' EPA Self-ratings with Age Identification

Factor	r	Beta	Proportion of Criterion Variance	F	P
Evaluation	-.060	.146	.009	2.209	>.05
Potency	-.144	-.074	.011	0.537	>.05
Activity	-.232	-.272	.063	8.418	<.01
Multiple R = .255		F = 4.317		p <.05	

Discussion

Among the relatively healthy group of older workers studied, few of the demographic, physical, interpersonal, attitudinal, or work-related variables examined were found related to age identification. This was especially true when chronological age was controlled for. The one area in which consistently significant relationships were found was with respect to psychological well-being. Contrary to previous findings which failed to control for health, older identifiers in this study were found to exhibit higher levels of life

satisfaction and self-perceived happiness. Older identifiers did score lower on an overall measure of self-concept. However, this was due to the fact that older identifiers perceived themselves as less active and, to some extent, as less potent. In contrast, on the evaluation dimension, which is generally acknowledged as a measure of self-esteem (Wells & Marwell, 1976) no relationship was found with age identification.

Questioned by the findings of this study is the widespread assumption that a youthful age identification is an essential requirement for successful adjustment to aging. Quite to the contrary, the results indicate that among older persons in good health those who can freely accept the reality of their aging are often better adjusted than those who persist in its continued denial.

The present findings are consistent with those of a recent study of aging group-consciousness among older residents in a congregate housing facility (Lane, 1977). Aging group-consciousness was operationalized according to the degree of involvement in senior citizen social and political activities as well as the acknowledgement of special problems faced by older people. Aging group-consciousness was found to be positively related to morale. The author concluded that programs which foster the development of an aging subculture could contribute to greater morale while the denial of chronological age may result in its decrease, rather than its increase. This conclusion is, however, somewhat weakened by the failure to control for health in this study.

It should be noted that few of the subjects in the present study identified themselves as old or very old. This is consistent with most studies of age identification in which a youthful age bias is generally found. Consequently, most of the age identification variance in the present study was

generated by differences in the designations of oneself as "middle-aged" as opposed to "just past middle-aged". The possibility therefore exists that the major impact of age identification only occurs at the crucial juncture when a self-identification as "old" is actually assumed. This issue merits further research. Additional longitudinal studies in this area would likewise be desirable, given the clear ontogenetic nature of the age identification concept.

Summary

A review of the literature on age identification revealed generally inconsistent findings and correlations of low magnitude in most areas. Older identifiers did emerge as chronologically older and to have less positive subjective ratings of physical health and morale. However, few of the studies examining other correlates controlled for chronological age or for the generally acknowledged effect of health on morale. In those instances where this was done previously found relationships were usually reduced to insignificance.

The present study examined the correlates of age identification among a group of 200 workers, aged 55 and over, who predominantly perceived their health as positive. Few of the demographic, physical, interpersonal, attitudinal, or work-related variables examined were found related to age identification. In the area of psychological well-being, older identifiers were found to have higher levels of life satisfaction and self-perceived happiness. An older age identification did reflect self-perceptions of oneself as less active and less potent. However, on the evaluative dimension which is indicative of self-esteem, no relationship was found with age identification. The findings question the widespread assumption that a youthful age identification is an essential requirement of successful aging.

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